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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

14 July 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Dennis J. Doolin
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
for East Asia and Pacific Affairs

SUBJECT : Hung's Memorandum and the Lewis Interview

1. Per the requests levied in our recent conversation with Mr. Nutter, I asked several of my colleagues to read Mr. Hung's 1 July memorandum with considerable care. They were all quite negative.

25X1 2. OCI (principally [redacted] commented as follows:

The [Hung] memo is an imaginative but not very convincing analysis of leadership difficulties. The author has used recent elections and some minor shuffling of government personalities in Hanoi as new indications that Truong Chinh is about to unseat Le Duan. This is too much even for OCI (who loves leadership challenges). No amount of searching among personnel changes in the National Assembly is going to prove that it (or any government agency) is a source of independent power or that Truong Chinh as its leader could use it to effectively challenge control of the party.

25X1 3. My associate, [redacted] a long time and thorough student of North Vietnamese statements and documents, had a similar negative reaction which he expressed as follows:

Mr. Hung's memorandum of 1 July 1971 is interesting and thought-provoking, but lamentably is shallow, over-simplified and erroneous in its treatment of the

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North Vietnamese leadership situation. We are not questioning Mr. Hung's sources of information -- overt DRV media -- but rather his judgments and conclusions. The picture of Le Duan and Truong Chinh currently scheming and plotting against each other to the point that a final showdown may be approaching in the near future is an old refrain that is hearsay and unsubstantiated.

4. In essence, while we feel Mr. Hung makes imaginative and thorough use of a rather narrow body of evidence, we have serious trouble with his overall judgments and general conclusions in light of totality of evidence actually available, at least within government circles.

5. All of us also had a good deal of trouble with Mr. Hung's thesis that no "southerner" can ever become a true leader of North Vietnam. Both Le Duan -- who is in very firm control of the Party apparatus -- and Pham Van Dong -- who, as Premier, has long been in charge of the state machinery -- are both from that portion of Annam which lies south of the 17th Parallel. Actually, Annam (or Central Vietnam) has provided most of the top leaders for both North and South Vietnam, e.g., Ho Chi Minh, Pham Van Dong, Le Duan, Ngo Dinh Diem, and Nguyen Van Thieu.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachments

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